meaningful quantities being delivered to the needy and deserving.

State Governments/UT Administrations may consider a policy of excluding the relatively better off sections from access to PDS (levy) sugar supply, so that higher allocations can be made to the poorer sections.

Supplies of PDS Kerosene oil should continue to be made universally. However, holders of double bottle LPG connections may either be excluded from entitlement of kerosene or given a reduced scale.

Steps should be taken on a continual basis to strengthen and streamline the delivery system so that the minimum quantities envisaged to be delivered to the vulnerable sections can reach them regularly.

Increases in Central Issue Prices of foodgrains should not necessarily be related to increase in Minimum Support Prices. End Retail Prices should be kept at considerably lower levels than market prices so as to make the PDS effective.

The Central Government should adopt suitable policy measures to increase production and procurement of common rice of acceptable quality for supply of the PDS.

The Central Government should undertake movement and stocking of PDS foodgrains in different areas in consultation with the State Governments and UT Administrations.

Efforts should be made to improve the quality of foodgrain supplied for the PDS.

Option should be given to States/UTs to receive their allocation on quarterly basis instead of the present system of monthly allocations.

Strengthening of PDS in the Country

267. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) what steps Government have so far taken or propose to take to strengthen and broaden the Public Distribution System in the country as social safety measure in the context of the ongoing structural adjustments in the economy;

(b) whether Government have issued any instruction or guidelines to the State Governments in this regard, if so, what are the details thereof:

(c) the extent to which each State Government has so far implemented and adopted the instructions/guidelines of the Central Government for strengthening and broadening the Public Distribution System; and

(d) what is the percentage of population in poor and backward classes in each State covered and deriving benefits under the Public Distribution System?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (d) Matters relating to strengthening and streamlining of the Public Distribution System (PDS) are discussed at the meeting of the Advisory Council on PDS, of which the State Governments are members. In order to improve the reach of the PDS in farflung, remote, hilly, tribal areas etc. about 1752 blocks were identified in consultation with the State Governments which are covered by various area specific programmes such as Drought Prone Area Programmes (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP), Designated Hill Areas (DHA) and Integrated Tribal Development Projects (ITDP). The Central Government has earmarked an additional 2 million tonnes of foodgrains for distribution in the identified areas under the Revamped PDS at a specially subsidised prices. The State Governments were requested to take action for opening additional fair prices shops in unserved or under served areas, issue additional ration cards to people not so far covered, create storage capacity for stocking of foodgrains in the interior areas, make

suitable arrangements for door-step delivery of PDS commodities to the FPS, distribute additional items of mass consumption through the PDS network. The State Governments have taken steps for their implementation.

Strengthening and steamlining of PDS is a continuous process and regular consultation with the State Governments take place for review of the functioning of PDS. Implementation of the decisions taken in PDS Council and other Committees are continuously reviewed by the Central Government. State Governments have also been advised to set up vigilance committees at FPS level given representation to women, consumers in such committee, to reserve certain percentage of FPS for SC/ST, women and organisations run by them, intensify the checking of FPS and take stringent action against traders indulging in unfair trade practices etc.

The operatonal responsibility for implementation of PDS is that of the State Governments which include issue of ration cards, coverage of population, eligibility criteria, periodicity of availability, scale of entitlement, opening of FPSs etc.

A few State Governments have schemes to supply foodgrains/additional foodgrains to cover the poor sections of the population. Some State Governments are supplying foodgrains at specially subsidised prices to the poor, by providing additional subsidy from their own resources.

More storage and transportation facilities for vegetables and fruit growers

268. SHRI RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are contemplating to provide more facilities for storing and transporting Vegetables and Fruits in order to assure remunerative prices for the producers and to protect the consumers from exhorbitant prices; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) and (b) The National Cooperative Development Corporation Provides financial assistance for processing facilities to some Cooperative Societies for creation of storage facilities which form a component of such projects along with procurement, processing, transportation and marketing of vegetables and fruits to provide remunerative prices to producers. While no specific proposal for creation of such storage facilities is under consideration, it may be mentioned that Cooperative Institutions do intervene when market conditions so require, to protect producers and consumers interests.

Consumer Protection Council in the Country

269. SHRI P. UPENDRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Consumer Protection Councils have been set up all over the country;

(b) if so, what is the number of these councils, Statewise; and

(c) what steps are being taken by Government to form the councils in the remaining areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED): (a) to (c) As per information available with the Government, all the States/UTs have constituted the State Level Consumer Protection Councils under the Consumer Protection Act, 1986. Recently, Central Government has also reconstituted the Central Consumer Protection Council as envisaged in the Act.